

LENA C. TAYLOR

Wisconsin State Senator • 4th District

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Senate Committee on Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs

Testimony of Senator Lena C. Taylor

Senate Bill 494

Wednesday, February 27, 2008

Honorable Chairman Coggs and Honorable Members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee and offer testimony on Senate Bill 494, relating to the hiring of civil service positions by the Civil Service Commission in Milwaukee. I am happy to bring this addition to state law before this committee, along with Senator Jeff Plale of the 7th Senate District.

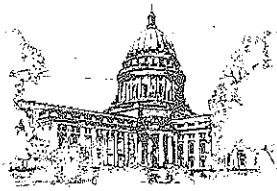
Currently, under state law for a first-class city (currently, only Milwaukee), the commission may certify to the appointing authority only the top three candidates for non-management positions or the top five persons for managerial jobs.

However, I have reports that, in practice, deserving job seekers who have scored well on exams have been unfairly excluded from consideration simply because their scores were identical to others. The commission has been required to arbitrarily select, for example, only three non-management candidates, even if four or five or more had identical scores that should've qualified them.

Under this bill, the commission may correct that unfairness by having latitude to certify any number of eligible candidates ranked highest on the list, and all persons on the list with the same test score must be included on the same certification.

The City of Milwaukee has supported this measure. I encourage you to support this bill.

Thank you.



WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY
Christine Sinicki
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Public Testimony on Senate Bill 494
Senate Committee on Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs
February 27, 2008


Honorable Chairman Coggs and Members:

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to testify before you today. Senate Bill 494 was drafted at the request of the City of Milwaukee, which is the only municipality in Wisconsin still subject to the "rule of three" law (chapter 63.39 of the state statutes). The "rule of three" is a hiring mechanism whereby prospective applicants are examined and scored; the top three scoring applicants' names are then certified and submitted to the appointing department. For management and supervisory positions the number of applicants is increased to five.

These certification rules date back to the late 1800's and were intended to ensure the highest quality civil service and to end political patronage and favoritism. However, the law was designed to fit a human resource management reality that is vastly different than today's. Federal and State employment laws now require employers to fairly and objectively consider employment for all individuals. The "rule of three" is an unnecessary additional layer of bureaucracy that should be removed in order to enhance employer flexibility, expand the employee base and make the civil service certification process more efficient.

Again, thank you for your time Chairman Coggs and honorable Members. I welcome your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,


CHRISTINE SINICKI
State Representative
20th Assembly District